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REPRINT DEPARTMENT

THE HISTORY OF OREGON, GEOGRAPHICAL AND POLITICAL.

BY GEORGE WILKES.

[Continued from the Last Issue of the Washington Historical Quarterly.]

PART II.

Historical Account of the Discovery and Settlement of Oregon Territory, Comprising an Examination of the Old Spanish Claims, the British Pretensions, and a Deduction of the United States Title.

THE OLD SPANISH CLAIMS.*

Up to the year 1803, the western boundary of the United States was the River Mississippi, which shut from our possession the vast region known by the name of Louisiana, now comprising Iowa, Missouri, Missouri Territory, Indian Territory, Arkansas and the small portion at its southern extremity which still retains the former name of all. This immense country, stretching from British America on the north to the Gulf of Mexico on the south, and spreading breadthwise from the Mississippi to the Rocky Mountains, was originally owned by France, who obtained her title to it through the discovery of the mouth of the great stream which drains it, by two of her missionaries, in 1663, and by subsequent settlements under La Sale and others. In 1763, France ceded Louisiana to Spain. In 1800 Spain ceded it back again to France, and in 1803 it was purchased from France by the United States for the sum of \$15,000,000. As soon as this purchase was made, the importance of Oregon as a Pacific gate to our possessions, became at once apparent, and Jefferson, under the direction of Congress, commissioned Captains Lewis and Clark "to explore the river Missouri and its principal branches to their sources, to cross the Rocky Mountains and trace to its termination in the Pacific some stream, whether the Columbia, the Oregon, the Colorado or any other, which might

*Though it is hardly necessary to mention to the reader in this stage of our examination, that the United States purchased from Spain, in 1819, all the right devolving to her on the North West coast above 42 deg. north latitude by virtue of her discoveries and settlements, it will do no harm to direct him to bear in mind that in making out *her* title, we of consequence establish our own.

offer the most direct and practicable water communication across the continent for the purposes of commerce." In 1805 these officers and their men crossed the mountains, and descending into Oregon, discovered a number of streams flowing westward, which, upon examination, were found to disembogue into the Columbia or some of its huge branches, whose comprehensive arms embrace within their span the 42d and 53d parallels, and roll their silver bands from the mountains to the sea. On the 15th of November they reached its mouth, and building a fort which they called "Fort Catslop," they spent the winter there. In the spring of 1806 (March 13th), having minutely explored the surrounding country, the party set out on their return, and after proceeding some distance up the stream, parted company; the one to explore the region north, and the other the country south. They met in the month of August following, at the junction of the Yellowstone and the Missouri Rivers, on the eastern side of the mountains. Thus we find that after having discovered the mouth of the Columbia in 1792, we explore the greater portion of the territory drained by it in 1805, build a fort at its mouth in November of that year, and thus take the actual possession "soon after," which is the positive condition of the principles of international law previously quoted.

This being a difficult circumstance to overcome, the British government were puzzled for a time how to rebut or to offset it; but their natural fertility of resource did not leave them long at a loss, and resorting to their old principle that bold assertion is as good as timid proof, they affirmed—that "at least in the same or **subsequent** years (1805-6) Mr. Thompson, an agent of the North West Company, had established posts among the Flathead or Kootanie tribes (near the 56th° of latitude) and that it was from this point he hastened down in 1811 to ascertain the nature of the American establishment at the mouth of the Columbia River."

This is a part of the celebrated diplomatic **Statement** of 1826, and from its definite and satisfactory character, is worthy of taking place beside the claims of Vancouver and Meares.

The accounts given by Lewis and Clark on the return of their expedition, attracted the attention of commercial men, and John Jacob Astor, an opulent merchant of New York, who was then engaged in the fur trade on the Upper Missouri, conceived the foundation of a company, whose efforts should be specially confined to the Coast of this region. Before his plans were con-

summated, however, the Missouri Company, another American association, established a post beyond the Rocky Mountains on the headwaters of the southern branch of the Columbia in 1808, but it was abandoned in 1810 from a difficulty, through the enmity of the neighboring savages, of obtaining regular supply of food.

In 1809 Mr. Astor had completed his arrangements, and the Pacific Fur Company by his exertions assumed a definite existence. In that year the ship *Enterprise* was sent into the North Pacific "to make preparatory researches and inquiries in the scenes of the new company's operations," and in 1810 two parties were formed, one to cross the continent under the conduct of W. P. Hunt, the chief agent, and the other to proceed on the ship *Tonquin* by sea. In March, 1811, the ship arrived at the mouth of the Columbia, and the colonists immediately selecting a spot, erected a factory and a fort, and in honor of the patron of the enterprise, called the establishment Astoria. By some means, the Mr. Thompson who is spoken of in the **Statement** alluded to, heard at his station on Fraser's Lake (between latitude 54° 55') of this new settlement, and gathering together a party, posted in hot haste down the northern branch of the Columbia, building huts, hoisting flags and bestowing names by way of taking possession as they passed along. They reached Astoria a little too late, for on arriving there in July, they found the banner of the States waving over a fort—they found factories erected, farms laid out, and the contented colonists eating of the produce of their already flourishing gardens. They were, therefore, obliged most reluctantly to retrace their steps northward, after receiving the unwelcome information that the posts of which they had pretended to take possession on their way down had most of them been visited five years before by officers of the United States.

In the spring of 1812, the other party of emigrants under Mr. Hunt, completed their journey across the continent, and arrived safely at the settlement among their brother traders. A few days after this event, the ship *Beaver* arrived from New York, with still further reinforcements and supplies, and it was decided that Mr. Hunt, the chief agent, should sail in her in charge of an expedition to the northern coasts, the affairs of the factory being entrusted (unfortunately as will be seen) to the charge of McDougal, one of the Scotchmen who had formerly been in the service of the North West Company. During the

absence of Mr. Hunt, the news of the declaration of war by the United States against Great Britain reached Astoria, and created no small degree of uneasiness in the minds of the American members of the company, for they at once saw the difficulties this would lead to between themselves and their British associates. This information was received in January from New York, and in June following an agent of the North West Company arrived from Canada, bringing news of the approach of a British naval force to take possession of the American settlement. The Scotchmen and Englishmen connected with the association received the report with ill concealed satisfaction, and several of them withdrew from the service at once for that of the rival company. Those who remained could scarcely be considered faithful, beyond the considerations of the pecuniary interests that were involved in the affair. Anxious consultations were held, in which the foreigners held a superior and controlling influence. This was the natural consequence of their position, for having been selected with a view to their superior knowledge of trading operations gained in a previous service with the North West Company, they held all the most responsible situations.

The latter proposed, in view of the approaching danger, to abandon the enterprise altogether; unless additional reinforcements and supplies should speedily arrive from New York to their assistance. This the Americans strenuously opposed, choosing rather to trust to the chances of their enemies not appearing, or in case they did, to risk the hazard of a struggle; but the resolution prevailed, and the minority of **interests** was bound to submit. At length Hunt arrived, but with all his efforts, was unable to change the determination of the Scottish partners, and knowing the impossibility of conducting the operations of the concern in case of their defection, he was obliged to submit to the arrangement. He, therefore, in pursuance of the decision set sail for the Sandwich Islands, for the purpose of **chartering** some vessels to convey the furs then stored in the factory, and other properties of the company, to Canton. In the month following his departure, a deputation from the North West Company descended the river to Astoria, bringing the additional information that a British **frigate** having under her convoy a large armed ship belonging to the N. W. Company, was on her way to the Columbia with the intention of destroying everything American in that quarter. The communication of this news was accompanied by an offer on the part of the leader of the deputation to

purchase out the whole stock in trade, and other properties of the Pacific company; adding as an additional inducement, that they would engage, at a liberal rate of wages, all who might choose to enter their service, and agreed to send back to the United States all who wished to return. This whole measure had doubtless been secretly concocted by the Scotch partners of the Pacific Company, who, to effect it, had got Hunt out of the way, and the agents of the other party were proceeding exactly according to previously imparted directions. The proposal to employ while it looked like an emanation of generosity, was a most insidious piece of treachery to entice away the employes on whom the Pacific Company depended for existence, and in such a state of society as existed there, was deserving of the punishment of death. It, however, afforded the Scotchmen an opportunity to secede without an appearance of absolute defection, and softened the opposition of those who were not unwilling to return to a more congenial society in their own country. The transfer was accordingly made, and the Pacific Company lost its identity in the North West Association.

From the time of their first arrival in the territory to the date of this relinquishment, the Pacific Company had established four forts or trading posts, besides the main one at Astoria. These were Fort Okanegan, situated at the confluence of that river and the north branch of the Columbia—Spokane House, on the river of the same name, and a branch of the latter establishment pushed further west, among the Flathead and Kootanic tribes—a post on the Kooskooske, and one on the Wallamette River. All of these establishments were included in the transfer of Astoria.

This inglorious termination of the enterprise took place on the 16th October, 1813. It was principally brought about by a Scotchman, named Duncan McDougal, whom Hunt had unwisely left in command of the fort, and who was strongly suspected of having been bribed to his course by the rival company. At any rate, the arrangement squared with his feelings, and he made it subserve his interest.

On the 1st December, before the transfer was completed, the British **sloop of war** *Raccoon* arrived at Astoria, expecting a rich plunder by the capture of the magazines and treasures of the Pacific Company; but all she found for prize was the American flag still waving its glorious folds above the fort. This remained there, notwithstanding the existence of the Pacific Company had

ceased more than two months before; for the citizens of the United States who had belonged to it, insisted that this emblem of the Republic's sovereignty over the soil, formed no portion of the transfer to the English company.

The following account of the capture of Astoria, and the taking possession of the fort, by Ross Cox, who gathered his information on the spot, shortly after the events took place, will not only serve to throw some light upon the motive of McDougal's treachery, but will also corroborate our claims to the first settlement of that region:

"Captain Black," (the commander of the Raccoon,) "took possession of Astoria in the name of his Britannic Majesty, and re-baptised it by the name of Fort George. He also insisted on having an inventory taken of the valuable stock of furs and other property purchased from the American company, with a view to the adoption of ulterior proceedings in England for the recovery of the value from the North West Company; but he subsequently relinquished this idea, and we heard no more of his claims. The Indians at the mouth of the Columbia knew well that Great Britain and America were distinct nations, and that they were then at war, but were ignorant of the arrangement made between Messrs. McDougal and Tavish, (the agent of the North West Company,) the former of whom still continued as nominal chief at the fort. On the arrival of the Raccoon, which they quickly discovered to be one of King George's fighting ships, they repaired armed to the fort, and requested an audience of Mr. McDougal. He was somewhat surprised at their numbers and warlike appearance, and demanded the object of such an unusual visit. Concomly, the principal chief of the Chenooks, (whose daughter McDougal had married,) thereupon addressed him in a long speech, in the course of which he said that King George had sent a ship full of warriors, and loaded with nothing but big guns, to take the Americans and make them all slaves; and that as **they** (the Americans) **were the first white men that settled in their country**, and treated the Indians like good relations, they resolved to defend them from King George's warriors, and were now ready to conceal themselves in the woods, close to the wharf, from whence they would be able with their guns and arrows to shoot all the men that should attempt to land from the English boats, while the people in the fort could fire at them with their big guns and rifles. This proposition was offered with an earnestness of manner that admitted no doubt of its sincerity; two armed boats from the Raccoon were approaching, and, had the people in the fort felt disposed to accede to the wishes of the Indians, every man of them would have been destroyed by an invisible enemy. Mr. McDougal thanked them for their friendly offer; but added, that notwithstanding the nations were at war, the people in the boats would not injure him

nor any of his people, and therefore requested them to throw by their war shirts and arms, and receive the strangers as their friends. They at first seemed astonished at this answer; but, on assuring them in the most positive manner that he was under no apprehensions, they consented to give up their weapons for a few days. They afterwards declared they were sorry for having complied with Mr. McDougal's wishes; for when they observed Captain Black, surrounded by his officers and marines, break the bottle of port on the flag-staff, and hoist the British ensign, after changing the name of the fort, they remarked, that however much one might wish to conceal the fact, the Americans were undoubtedly made slaves; and they were not convinced of their mistake until the sloop of war had departed without taking any prisoners."

It is not our intention to assert that McDougal should have accepted of this offer of the Indians against his own nation, but it proves that with such friends as the aborigines of the country, the settlement could never have been seriously distressed for supplies; and, therefore, that his representations, on which the resolution to abandon the place was based, were false. Had Mr. Hunt possessed those means of resistance, and been in McDougal's situation, the property of the company would not have been sold, and the flag upon the fort would never have been struck.

The war ended in 1814, and by the treaty of Ghent, signed on the 24th December, of that year, it was declared "**that all territory, places, and possessions whatever, taken by either party from the other during, or after the war, should be restored without delay.**" In accordance with the provisions of this article, the President of the United States, in October, 1817, despatched the sloop of war Ontario, with Captain Biddle and J. B. Prevost as Commissioners to Astoria and they duly received the surrender of that place by the British authorities, on the 6th day of October, 1818.

In this same year a negotiation was carried on in London between the plenipotentiaries of the two governments, for the settlement of a northern boundary line,* which resulted in the establishment of the 49th parallel, from the northwestern point of the Lake of the Woods to the Rocky Mountains, as the dividing line between the British possessions and the territory of the States, leaving the portion beyond the Rocky Mountains, bordering on the Pacific, subject to the restrictions of the following article:

*See Appendix, No. 7.

"Art. 3. It is agreed that any country that may be claimed by either party on the northwest coast of America, westward of the Stony Mountains, shall, together with its harbors, bays, and creeks, and the navigation of all rivers within the same, be free and open for the term of ten years from the date of the signature of the present Convention, to the vessels, citizens and subjects of the two powers; **it being well understood that this agreement is not to be construed to the prejudice of any claim which either of the two high contracting parties may have to any part of the said country, nor shall it be taken to affect the claims of another power or State to any part of the said country; the only object of the high contracting parties, in that respect, being to prevent disputes and difficulties among themselves.**"

It is plain from the wording of this article that England relied very lightly upon the strength of her own claims to the territory in dispute; the concluding clause being a virtual acknowledgment of the superior rights of Spain, whose anger is carefully deprecated, by the assurance that neither party aspired to her title, but that "their only object" in making this arrangement in regard to the common privileges of navigation, fishing, etc., was to "avoid differences among themselves." It is not necessary to explain that while this arrangement goes to conclude the pretensions of its proposer it does not now in the slightest degree affect us. The whole aim of the manoeuvre is sufficiently transparent to those acquainted with the political relations existing between the courts of Madrid and St. James at the periods of its performance. Impoverished and feeble Spain was looked upon by Great Britain as a much less formidable opponent than the Republic which had just emerged triumphantly from a war with her upon her own element. Her object, therefore, was to preclude us at all risks. She would be satisfied if she could make her own invalid title balance ours, for then she would **magnanimously** propose a joint relinquishment in favor of the third claimant whose cause she had so insidiously fortified.* After this it would not have been long, of course, before exhausted Spain would have been forced to redeem one of the deep involvements incurred in the peninsula war, by turning the Northwest Coast over to her subtle and grasping creditor. It would appear that our ministers at London divined this motive in the course of the negotiation, for an immediate offer was made on our part to Spain, and that power, wisely concluding to sell rather than

*This opinion is strengthened by one of England's present offers of compromise which is, that both of us relinquish Oregon, for the common settlement of it for an independent nation, and also by her recently developed intrigues in relation to California and Texas.

to give away, closed with our overtures at once; and thus England's over-reaching diplomacy was skillfully turned against herself.

The negotiation with Spain on this subject terminated on the 22d of February, 1819, (four months after the treaty of 1818 of which the above article is a part,) in what is now known as the "Florida Treaty." By this treaty the United States purchased all Florida, and likewise all the territory belonging to the crown of Spain north of the 42d degree of latitude for the sum of five millions of dollars, in the shape of a release of that amount of claims held against her by our merchants, and of which the United States assumed the payment. This arrangement of course merged the Spanish title in our own,* and by thus removing the only possible conflicting claim, placed the latter upon a basis of indisputable validity.

The chief value, however, that we attach to this cession on the part of Spain, is for its complete subversion of the pretensions of England, on the principle of original discovery of points of the coast. Our own individual title to Oregon is in itself made complete to 53° by the single principle of international law, which confers the whole country drained by a river and its tributaries to the discoverer of its mouth. We recognized this principle in the purchase of the immense territory formerly comprehended under the name of Louisiana, and while we have paid a penalty of **fifteen millions** of dollars in vindication of its integrity, we have a peculiar right to the benefit of it when it runs in our favor.†

The treaty of 1818 expiring in 1828, the convention was renewed in 1826, but as before, no definite conclusion was arrived at, and the negotiation resulted in the following year just where it had begun, the provisions of the former treaty being indefinitely extended, subject only to the additional stipulation that either party desiring to abrogate it, might do so on giving twelve months' notice to the other.‡

From the period after the sale of the Pacific Fur Company to the North West Association, (now merged in the Hudson's Bay

*See Appendix No. 8.

† It may be captiously objected to this argument, that France derived her title from the cession of Spain in 1800, but it will be recollected that France originally acquired a title to the vast region watered by the Mississippi by the discovery of the mouth of that river by two French missionaries in 1663, and sustained it by subsequent exploration and settlement, which is our case exactly in regard to the Columbia. On this claim she held it for a hundred years, till by a treaty of policy in 1763, involving no question of validity of title, it was ceded to Spain, and by a similar arrangement, on similar considerations, it was in 1800 ceded back to France. Its sovereignty passed from hand to hand on the strength of the principle involved in the original title, and by virtue of that principle it came to us.

‡ See Appendix, No. 9.

Company,) and the consequent departure of most of the Americans, British subjects, consisting entirely of attaches of this latter body, acquired a preponderance in the territory, and by ingenious management of their wealth and power, continued for a time progressively to increase it. This circumstance has been very seriously brought forward by the supporters of the English title, as a new right to the territory they usurp; as if the tyranny their monstrous wealth had enabled them to exercise over every American citizen within the reach of their influence, gave them an additional right to outrage the government by a usurpation of its title.

There is nothing overstrained in these remarks; indeed, they but very inadequately express the outrageous means resorted to by these affiliated tyrants to crush every interest opposed to them. The following extract taken from the work of Thomas P. Farnham, a traveler of ability and character, will afford some notion of their operations and policy:

"Fort Hall was built by Captain Wyeth, of Boston, in 1832, for the purposes of trade with the Indians in its vicinity. He had taken goods into the lower part of the Territory to exchange for salmon. But competition soon drove him from his fisheries to this remote spot, where **he hoped to be permitted** to purchase furs of the Indians without being molested by the Hudson's Bay Company, whose nearest post was seven hundred miles away.

In this he was disappointed. In pursuance of the avowed doctrine of that company, that no others have a right to trade in the furs west of the Rocky Mountains, while the use of capital and their incomparable skill and perseverance can prevent it, they established a fort near him, preceded him, followed him everywhere, and cut the throat of his prosperity with such kindness and politeness, that Wyeth was induced to sell his whole interest, existent and prospective, in Oregon, to his **generous** but too indefatigable, skilful and powerful antagonists."

Mr. Farnham has written the word "generous" in good faith and honest Roman characters, as if he really thought it were generous in the H. B. Company to give Mr. Wyeth a price for his property, after forcing him to its sale by the basest means! But Mr. Farnham ate a most superlative dinner afterward at Fort Vancouver, and this may somewhat account for the tenderness of his construction.

While we are upon this subject we will furnish the reader with a further insight into the corporate economy and operations of this association, from the same author:

"A charter was granted by Charles II., in 1670, to certain British subjects associated under the name of 'The Hudson's Bay Company,' in virtue of which they were allowed the exclusive privilege of establishing trading factories on the Hudson's Bay and its tributary rivers. Soon after the grant, the company took possession of the territory, and enjoyed its trade without opposition till 1787; when was organized a powerful rival under the title of the 'North American Fur Company of Canada.' This company was chiefly composed of Canadian-born subjects—men whose native energy and thorough acquaintance with the Indian character, peculiarly qualified them for the dangers and hardships of a fur trader's life in the frozen regions of British America. Accordingly we soon find the Northwest outreaching in enterprise and commercial importance their less active neighbors of Hudson's Bay; and the jealousies naturally arising between parties so situated, leading to the most barbarous battles, and the sacking and burning of each other's posts. This state of things in 1819 arrested the attention of Parliament, and an act was passed in 1821 consolidating the two companies into one, under the title of 'The Hudson's Bay Company.'

"This association is now, under the operation of their charter, in sole possession of all that tract of country bounded north by the Northern Arctic Ocean; east by the Davis' Straits and the Atlantic Ocean; south and southwestwardly by the northern boundary of the Canadas and a line drawn through the center of Lake Superior; thence northwestwardly to the Lake of the Wood; thence west on the 49th parallel of north latitude to the Rocky Mountains, and along those mountains to the 54th parallel; thence westwardly on that line to a point nine marine leagues from the Pacific Ocean; and on the west by a line commencing at the last mentioned point, and running northwardly parallel to the Pacific Coast till it intersects the 141st parallel of longitude west from Greenwich, England, and thence due north to the Arctic Sea.

"They have also leased for twenty years, commencing in March, 1840, all of Russian America except the post of Sitka; the lease renewable at the pleasure of the H. B. C. They are also in possession of Oregon under treaty stipulation between Britain and the United States. Its stockholders are British capitalists, resident in Great Britain. From these are elected a board of managers, who hold their meetings and transact their business at 'The Hudson's Bay House,' in London. This board buys goods and ship them to their territory, sell the furs for which they are exchanged, and do all other business connected with the company's transactions, except the execution of their own orders, the actual business of collecting furs, in their territory. This duty is entrusted to a class of men who are called partners, but who, in fact, receive certain portions of the annual net profits of the company's business as a compensation for their services.

"These gentlemen are divided by their employers into different grades. The first of these is the governor-general of all the company's posts in North America. He resides at York Factory, on the west shore of Hudson's Bay. The second class are chief factors; the third, chief traders; the fourth, traders. Below these is another class, called clerks. These are usually younger members of respectable Scottish families. They are not directly interested in the company's profits, but receive an annual salary of £100, food, suitable clothing, and a body servant, during an apprenticeship of seven years. At the expiration of this term they are eligible to the traderships, factorships, etc., that may be vacated by death or retirement from the service. While waiting for advancement they are allowed from £80 to £120 per annum. The servants employed about their posts and in their journeyings are half-breed Iroquois and Canadian Frenchmen. These they enlist for five years, at wages varying from \$68 to \$80 per annum.

"An annual council, composed of the governor-general, chief factors and chief traders, is held at York Factory. Before this body are brought the reports of the trade of each district; propositions for new enterprises, and modifications of old ones; and all these and other matters deemed important, being acted upon, the proceedings had thereon and the reports from the several districts are forwarded to the Board of Directors in London, and subjected to its final order.

"This shrewd company never allow their territory to be over-trapped. If the annual return from any well trapped district be less in any year than formerly, they order a less number still to be taken, until the beaver and other fur-bearing animals have time to increase. The income of the company is thus rendered uniform, and their business perpetual.

"Some idea may be formed of the net profit of their business from the facts that the shares of the company's stock, which originally cost £100, are at 100 per cent. premium, and that the dividends range from ten per cent. upward, and this too while they are creating out of the net proceeds an immense reserve fund, **to be expended in keeping other persons out of the trade.**

"They also have two migratory trading and trapping establishments of fifty or sixty men each—the one traps and trades in Upper California; the other in the country lying west, south and east of Fort Hall. They also have a steam vessel heavily armed, which runs along the coast, and among its bays and inlets, for the twofold purpose of trading with the natives in places where they have no post, and of outbidding and outselling any American vessel that attempts to trade in those seas. They likewise have five sailing vessels, measuring from 100 to 500 tons burthen and armed with cannon, muskets, cutlasses, etc. These are employed a part of the year in various kinds of trade about the coast and the islands of the North Pacific, and the remainder of the time in bringing goods from London, and bearing back the furs for which they are exchanged.

"One of these ships arrives at Fort Vancouver in the spring of each year, laden with coarse woolens, cloths, baizes and blankets; hardware and cutlery; cotton cloths, calicoes and cotton handkerchiefs; tea, sugar, coffee and cocoa; rice, tobacco, soap, beads, guns, powder, lead, rum, wine, brandy, gin and playing cards; boots, shoes and ready-made clothing, etc.; also, every description of sea stores, canvas, cordage, paints, oils, chains and chain cables, anchors, etc. Having discharged these 'supplies,' it takes a cargo of lumber to the Sandwich Islands, or of flour and goods to the Russians at Sitka or Kamskatka; returns in August; receives the furs collected at Fort Vancouver, and sails again for England.

"The value of peltries annually collected in Oregon, by the Hudson Bay Company, is about \$140,000 in the London or New York market. The prime cost of the goods exchanged for them is about \$20,000. To this must be added the percentage of the officers as governors, factors, etc., the wages and food of about 400 men, the expense of shipping to bring supplies of goods and take back the returns of furs, and two years' interest on the investments. The company made arrangements in 1839 with the Russians at Sitka and other ports, about the Sea of Kamskatka, to supply them with flour and goods at fixed prices. And as they are opening large farms on the Cowelitz, the Umpqua and in other parts of the Territory, for the production of wheat for that market; and as they can afford to sell goods purchased in England under a contract of 50 years' standing, 20 or 30 per cent. cheaper than American merchants can, there seems a certainty that the Hudson's Bay Company will engross the entire trade of the North Pacific, as it has that of Oregon.

"Soon after the union of the Northwest and Hudson's Bay Companies, the British Parliament passed an act extending the jurisdiction of the Canadian courts over the territories occupied by these fur-traders, whether it were 'owned' or 'claimed by Great Britain.' Under this act, certain gentlemen of the fur company were appointed justices of the peace, and empowered to entertain prosecutions for minor offenses, arrest and send to Canada criminals of a higher order, and try, render judgment and grant execution in civil suits were the amount in issue should not exceed £200; and in case of non-payment, to imprison the debtor at their own forts, or in the jails of Canada.

"And thus is shown that the trade, and the civil and criminal jurisdiction in Oregon are held by British subjects; that American citizens are deprived of their own commercial rights; that they are liable to be arrested on their own territory by officers of British courts, tried in the American domain by British judges, and imprisoned or hung according to the laws of the British Empire, for acts done within the territorial limits of the Republic."

We have here an example of the very liberal construction the British government have put upon the common right to "navi-

gate the bays, creeks and harbors of the coast." In defiance of a treaty expressly denying the arrogation of any right of sovereignty on the part of either of the high contracting parties over the other, it has seized upon the chief prerogatives, nay, the very essence of sovereignty itself, by the establishment of courts of judicature throughout the territory, and by the positive enforcement of its laws on all within it.

That this course justifies any extremity of counter action on our part, in the shape of immediate occupation, or otherwise, is plain to the judgment of any unbiased mind. Indeed, when we consider the inimical influences that have been unfairly brought to bear upon the interests of our citizens—withering their enterprise and paralyzing their energies—we can hardly restrain from advocating retaliatory proceedings to fulfill the measure of redress.*

Having traced, in regular detail, the progress of every important event connected with the discovery and settlement of the Northwest Coast and the Territory of Oregon, we may now take a brief and comprehensive view of the whole subject, for the purpose of measuring at a glance the aspect and merits of the entire question.

We find, then, that a piece of territory, comprising four hundred thousand square miles, and lying on the Northwest Coast between parallels 42° and $54^{\circ} 40'$ north, is claimed by Great Britain and the United States respectively.

We find that the English government advance international law in support of their claims, and base their pretensions upon the principles which confer title by discovery, and which bestow the possession and sovereignty of the whole region drained by a river and its tributaries, upon the discoverer of its mouth; and we find that they have nothing better to offer than the voyages of Drake and Cook to entitle them to the benefits of the first, and that they seek to secure the latter by the exploits of **Meares** and **Vancouver**!

The United States accept these propositions, rebutting all the flimsy pretensions by which they are sought to be sustained on the other side, by the Spanish title; and confirming its own, independent of both, on the exclusive merits of having first discov-

*We have learned by recent information from Oregon, that the American settlers beyond the Rocky mountains have resisted the exercise of British authority, and formed a local legislature of their own. If our citizens should be able to sustain their new position, it does not alter the nature of the above aggression. The oppressor is none the less deserving of condemnation because he is obliged to relinquish the victims of his wrong.

ered, first explored and first settled the territory in question. The conclusions are established in the order following:

First—We find that Spain, whose claims are ours by purchase, had explored the coast as high as latitude 43° north, nearly forty years previous to the arrival of Drake at the same point, and we find in a series of national expeditions she stretched that exploration to the 58th degree in 1775, three years previous to the arrival of Captain Cook, on whose assumed discovery of Nootka the English place their heaviest degree of reliance.

Second—We find that the impudent claim for **Meares**(!) of the discovery of the Columbia, because he looked for and could not find it, is subverted by the superior claim of Heceta, (if either exploit furnishes a claim,) who sailed through its bay three years before, asserted its existence, assigned its precise latitude, and laid it down upon the Spanish charts.

Third—We find that Captain Robert Gray, of Boston, in the course of the years 1790 and 1791, discovered sounds, inlets and channels; entered rivers and circumnavigated islands along the whole line of the coast; that in 1792, he next discovered the mouth of the Columbia, and navigated it to the distance of over twenty miles inland before any other white man had ever seen it; and sorry are we to say, we also find that a mean and dishonorable attempt was made to rob him of the honor due to the daring exploit, by two British officers, who, though they sailed thither, months afterwards, with his charts for their guides, sought by a disgraceful quibble to appropriate his credit to themselves.

Fourth—We find that during the years 1796 and 1814, the trade and commerce of the North Pacific was carried on exclusively by our citizens, and that they rendered the geography of that region almost perfect by the numerous discoveries they made in ranging up and down its northwest shores.

Fifth—We find that the British reliance on the pretended concessions of the Spanish treaty of 1790 is forced and fallacious, for the war of 1796 annulled its imperfect stipulations, and their clinging to it has no other effect than to substantiate the value of our purchase.

Sixth—We find that having triumphantly rebutted the English claims on the score of **discovery**, we beat them likewise on the points of exploration and settlement, for in 1805-6, a scientific commission, appointed by our government, thoroughly explored the Oregon territory from the sources of the Columbia

to the sea, and were in full possession of it by settlement six months, or a year, before a British establishment was made, even as low as 55° north.

And thus, to conclude, we find that every condition imposed by justice, every formality required by international law, has been performed by us to consummate our right to Oregon; and while all our dealings in reference to the subject have been straightforward, and in good faith, we have been met with nothing on the part of England but arrogant assumption, low finesse and vulgar cheatery. No wrong has been too bold for their attempt, no resource too mean for their adoption, and the contempt that is in one moment excited by the unworthy fetch of a pretended discoverer, or the miserable subterfuge of a conspiracy of geographers, gives place in the next to indignation aroused at the unparalleled arrogation of a foreign corporation of sovereignty over the free citizens of our Republic.

If we have submitted to this long enough, it is surely time for us to say so. Right knows of no degrees; Justice acknowledges no relationship with policy; and we should reject the proffer of a compromise as unworthy of the dignity of our claims. The acceptance of a composition is at best but a submission to a portion of wrong, and the nation which takes but a share of its due, when it is strong enough to enforce the whole, is dishonored both in the eyes of its own people and of the world. Let us therefore settle this question as becomes us, and no longer stand in the humiliating position of negotiating with Great Britain, whether we shall have our own or no! We should be baffled no longer with the absurd pretensions of the Drakes, the Cooks, the Vancouvers and the Meares, those diplomatic John Does and Richard Roes, who are only introduced to confuse the question and to mislead its issues. We should disdain all compromises and refuse all proposals of arbitrament. Monarchs are no judges for republics. We should, in brief, reject the entertainment of any consideration short of the full and unconditional **resumption of all Oregon**, whenever such a policy shall be deemed by us to be necessary.

GEOGRAPHICAL AND GENERAL VIEW OF OREGON.

Its Islands.

Having satisfactorily established our title to Oregon, our next inquiry becomes, what it is, and how we may most readily and

completely avail ourselves of its advantages. We have already shown in the foregoing pages that Oregon is a vast country lying on the Pacific Ocean, stretching along the coast through twelve degrees and forty minutes of latitude, extending its eastern limits into the body of the Rocky mountains, and embracing within those boundaries an area of four hundred thousand square miles. Attached to this immense territory, and extending along the whole line of its coast from the Strait of Fuca to its northern limit, and even beyond that to the Arctic Sea, is a continuous chain of islands, known by the general name of the Northwest Archipelago, which in themselves can scarcely be regarded as less than a feature of secondary importance. The largest are all traversed by mountain ridges, in the direction of their greatest length, and the whole archipelago may be considered as a portion of the westernmost chain of mountains, broken off from the mainland at the Strait of Fuca, and running through the sea, connecting those of Oregon on the south, with the range on the north, of which Mounts Fairweather and St. Elias are the most prominent peaks.

The first and chief of these islands is Quadra and Vancouver's. This extends along the coast from $48^{\circ} 30'$, in a northerly direction, for the space of one hundred and sixty miles, and forms, by its parallel course with the coast, (from which it is distant about twenty miles,) the celebrated arm of the sea called the Strait of Fuca. Its average width is about forty-five miles, and it contains a surface of about 15,000 square miles. The climate of this island is mild and salubrious, and large portions of its soil are arable and capable of advantageous cultivation. It has an abundance of fine harbors, which afford accommodations for vessels of any size. The chief of these is Nootka Sound, the Port Lorenzo of the Spaniards, a spacious and secure bay, running deep into the land, under parallels $49^{\circ} 34'$, and containing within itself many other harbors, affording most excellent anchorage.

A few miles south of Nootka we come to another large bay, called Clyoquot, in which we have seen that Captain Kendrick preferred to remain during the winter of 1789, to any other harbor on the coast. There is another, still further south, named Nittinat, which lies at the entrance of the Strait of Fuca, and is filled with an archipelago of little islands. The coasts of this island, and indeed the coasts of those above, abound with fine fish of various descriptions, among which the salmon predominate. In consequence of their fisheries, the islands are more numerously populated by the natives than the territory of the mainland.

The next island of significance is Washington, or Queen Charlotte's. It received the former title from Captain Gray, who circumnavigated it for the first time in the summer of 1789. It is triangular in its form, is one hundred and fifty miles in length, and contains four thousand square miles. After Gray's visit, it became the favorite resort of the American traders of the North

Pacific. Its climate and soil are represented by Captain Ingraham as being extremely well adapted for agricultural purposes, particularly those portions in the vicinity of a fine harbor in latitude $53^{\circ} 3'$ on its eastern coast, and at Port Estrada, or Hancock's River, on the north side.

The islands of the next importance below the southern cape of Prince of Wales' Island, (which is the point of our northern boundary line,) are Pitt's, Burke's, Dundas' and the Princess Royal groups. Most of these lie between Washington Island and the shore, and form a numerous archipelago, which renders the intervening navigation extremely tortuous and difficult. Between Washington and Vancouver's Island are a continuous line of others, of considerable size, lying closer to the land, and following with their eastern outlines almost every sinuosity of the continental shore. These latter groups are for the most part uninhabited, and are composed of granite and pudding stone, which appear to be the prevailing rock north of latitude forty-nine. They are generally destitute of fresh water, and having but few anchorages, the strong, intervening currents render navigation perplexed and dangerous. They are only resorted to by the natives in the spring and in the fall on account of their fisheries.

The Coast and Its Harbors.

The coast of Oregon from the forty-second parallel to the mouth of the Columbia pursues a northwardly course, and from that point trends with a slight and gradual westerly inclination to the Strait of Fuca. Its profile consists of a bold, high, wall-like shore of rock, only occasionally broken into gaps or depressions, where the rivers of the territory find their way into the sea. The first of these openings above the southern boundary line is the mouth of the Klamet. This is a stream of considerable size, issuing from the land in $42^{\circ} 40'$, and extending into it to a distance of 150 miles. It has two large tributaries, called by the unromantic titles of Shasty and Nasty Rivers, an error of taste which it is to be hoped the future "Alleghenians" who inhabit their fertile valleys will correct and reform. The bay of the Klamet is admissible only for vessels of very light draught; its whole valley is extremely fertile, and the country adjacent to the stream abounds with a myrtaceous tree, which, at the slightest agitation of the air, diffuses a fragrance that lends to it another feature of an earthly paradise. Between this and the Umpqua River, disemboing in $33^{\circ} 30'$, are two other small streams, neither of which, however, afford a harbor available for commercial purposes.

The Umpqua River is a considerable stream, entering the land to the distance of a hundred miles. It has a tolerable harbor, navigable, however, only for vessels drawing eight feet of water, and its stream, thirty miles from the sea, is broken by rapids and falls. Its valley is blessed with its portion of the general fertility of the lower region of Oregon, and consists of

alternate groves of stupendous timber and rich arable plains. The Hudson's Bay Company have a fort at the mouth of the river, the site of which is the scene of a flourishing settlement. Five lesser streams find their way into the sea, at intervals, from this point to the mouth of the Columbia, and contribute their aid in fertilizing the extensive region lying between the coast and the parallel barrier running at the distance of a hundred or a hundred and fifty miles, known as the President's range of mountains.

The mouth of the Columbia is found at $46^{\circ} 16'$, but is only distinguishable from the sea by a slight and gradual inner curve in the shore. Like all the harbors former by the rivers on the sea coast, it is obstructed with extensive sandbars, formed by the deposits of the river on its meeting with the ocean, and, according to Lieutenant Wilkes, "its entrance, which has from four and a half to eight fathoms of water, is impracticable for two-thirds of the year, and the difficulty of leaving it is equally great." It is thought by some that these obstacles may be removed in time by artificial means, but it is an extremely doubtful question whether it can ever be made an available harbor for vessels of any draught.

Passing Cape Disappointment, the northern headland of the river's mouth, we sail forty miles further north, where we find a secure anchorage in Gray's Bay for vessels drawing ten feet of water; but this harbor is considered of little importance on account of the extensive sand flats, which usurp the greatest portion of its entire surface. From Gray's Bay to Cape Flattery, the southern point of the Strait of Fuca, but two streams, and those of but trifling significance, break the overhanging barrier of the coast.

We have now traversed the whole coast of Oregon lying immediately on the Pacific, and in its course of five hundred miles find but two places of refuge for vessels, (Gray's Bay and the mouth of the Columbia,) and even these are of but trifling importance in a commercial point of view. Indeed, all geographical authorities agree that none of the harbors on this portion of the coast can be deemed safe ports to enter.

The next branch of the coast demanding our attention is that which lies along the Strait of Fuca. This immense area of the sea cuts off the northward line of the coast at Cape Flattery, in latitude $48^{\circ} 23'$, and runs apparently into the land in a southeasterly direction for about a hundred and twenty miles. It then turns northwest by west, and following that direction for three hundred miles more, joins the sea again at Pintard's Sound. The southern portion of this strait varies from fifteen to thirty miles in width, and the coast of Oregon along its course is an exception in its maritime advantages to the portion immediately on the sea. It abounds with fine inland sounds, offering a secure anchorage to vessels of the heaviest draught, and there are no portions of the interior navigation which conceals a hidden danger. The straits can be entered in any wind, and the great rise and

fall of the tides offer facilities for building maritime establishments unsurpassed in any portion of the world. Here, whatever direction emigration may for the present take the commercial operations of the territory will eventually center, and the din of our naval arsenals will proclaim to the world the fulfillment of the prediction that

"The course of empire has westward found its way."

The most important branch of this strait is a spacious arm descending from its eastern extremity in a southerly direction into the land to the distance of one hundred miles. It is called Admiralty Inlet, and the lowermost portion of it is known as Puget's Sound. This inlet, like the other southern portions of the strait, is filled with splendid harbors, the southernmost of which has the peculiar advantage of being within but little more than three hundred miles of the navigable waters of the Missouri. Great quantities of bituminous coal have been found in its vicinity, and there are other peculiar advantages attached to the station which must eventually make it a point of the first importance. These circumstances have not escaped the watchful eyes of the Hudson's Bay Company, and they have already established a fort and a settlement there by way of securing possession of the point.* At the southeast end of Vancouver's Island there is a small archipelago of islands which, though well wooded, are generally destitute of fresh water. They are, consequently, for the most part uninhabited. The coast of the mainland along the northwestern course of the strait is cut up and penetrated by numerous inlets, called from their perpendicular sides and deep water canals. They afford no good harbors, and offer but few inducements to frequent them. One large river empties into the strait about latitude 49°, which pursues a northerly direction for several hundred miles. It is called the Tacoutche, or Fraser's River, and has a trading post named Fort Langley, situated near its mouth. The other portion of the coast to the north is much of the same character as that south of this river, on the strait. It is cut up by inlets and the numerous islands which line it, and the heavy fogs that are frequent in the region render it at all times difficult to approach or to navigate.

THE NATURAL DIVISION OF OREGON.

The Three Regions.

Oregon is divided into three distinct regions, by three separate mountain ranges, with an additional inferior chain, binding the extreme outline of the Pacific Coast.

Overlooking the rim upon the ocean edge, the first chain we

*The consideration of the maritime advantages of the southern coast of the Strait of Fuca and Puget's Sound, suggests a pretty forcible view of the remarkable liberality of Great Britain's offer of the Columbia as the line of compromise. This, while it secures to her every navigable harbor, does not leave us one.

come to is the Cascade Mountains, or as they are sometimes called the President's Range. They start below the forty-second parallel, and run on a line with the coast at a distance varying from 100 to 150 miles throughout the whole length of the territory, rising in many places to a height from 12,000 to 15,000 feet above the level of the sea in separate cones. Their succession is so continuous as to almost interrupt the communication between the sections, except where the two great rivers, the Columbia and Fraser's, force a passage through; an achievement which they only accomplish by being torn into foam, plunged down precipices or compressed into deep and dismal gorges. This chain of mountains have obtained the title of the President's Range in consequence of their most elevated peaks having been named after the chief magistrates of the United States by a patriotic American traveler.

The stupendous line runs from Mount Jackson to Mount Tyler, and there is yet room among their gigantic cousins for several succeeding dignitaries. The idea which suggested their adaptation to our natural history was a happy one. Perpetual mementos in the archives of our nation, they form no perishable notes of heraldry for the contempt of a succeeding age, but basing their stupendous data upon the eternal earth, pierce with their awful grandeur the region of the clouds, to transcribe their records on the face of heaven. The first of them, Mount Jackson, commences the list in $41^{\circ} 10'$; Jefferson stands in $41^{\circ} 30'$; John Quincy Adams in $42^{\circ} 10'$; Madison in 43° ; Monroe in $43^{\circ} 10'$; Adams in 45° ; Washington (the Mount St. Helens of the English) in 46° ; Van Buren, northwest of Puget's Sound, in 48° ; Harrison, east of the same, in $47\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$, and Tyler in 49° . Of these Mount Jackson is the largest, and is said to rise above the level of the sea near twenty thousand feet. Washington, which is next in size, is estimated at 17,000 to 18,000. This is the most beautiful of all. It ascends in a perfect cone, and two-thirds of its height is covered with perpetual snow.*

The region of country lying between this range of mountains and the sea is known as **the first or lower region of Oregon.**

The Blue Mountains form the next division. They commence nearly in the center of Oregon, on parallel of longitude 43° west from Washington, and in 46° of latitude. They run southwest-erly from this point for 200 miles in an irregular manner, occasionally interrupted, and shooting off in spurs to the south and west.

The region between this ridge and the President's Range is called **the second or middle region.**

Beyond the Blue Mountains and lying between them and the Rocky Mountains is **the high country or third region of Oregon.**

The general course of the Rocky Mountains is from south to southeast. They run south from $54^{\circ} 46'$ parallel to the coast (at a distance of 500 miles) for three hundred miles, and grad-

*The limit of perpetual snow for these mountains is, according to Lieutenant Wilkes, 6,500 feet from the level of the sea.

ually extend their distance from the sea by a continuous southeasterly course to over seven hundred at the 40th degree. In these mountains, and their offsets, rise the principal rivers which find their way into the Pacific to the west and the Gulf of Mexico on the east. Near the forty-second parallel is a remarkable depression in the chain called "the Southern Pass" which experience has proved affords a short and easy route **for carriages** from our states into the territory of Oregon. Above the 48th parallel, again, other passes are formed by the course of the rivers, from either side, which find their way in some places between the mountains. There are other ridges intersecting the face of this vast country, but they are principally offsets or spurs of the three main chains already described. The principal of these is the wind river cluster, on the east of the Rocky Mountains, from which flow many of the headwaters of the Missouri and the Yellowstone Rivers.

Climate and Characteristics of the Three Regions.

The third region or high country is a rocky, barren, broken country, traversed in all directions by stupendous mountain spurs on the peaks of which snow lies nearly all the year. It is from two to three thousand feet above the level of the sea, and in consequence, the river flowing through it westward to the Columbia are broken at frequent intervals by rugged descent and rendered unnavigable almost throughout the whole of their course. There are but few arable spots in this whole section of territory, its level plains, except narrow strips in the immediate vicinity of the rivers, being covered with sand or gravel and being also generally volcanic in their character. The distinguishing features of the territory are its extreme dryness and the difference of its temperature between the day and the night. It seldom rains except during a few days in the spring and no moisture is deposited in dews. In addition to these discouraging features, the climate, from its enclosure between these snowy barriers, is extremely variable, a difference of fifty and sixty degrees taking place between sunrise and midday. The soil is moreover much impregnated with salts, springs of which abound in many places. It will be seen by reference to the journal which forms the latter portion of this work that some of these possess highly medicinal qualities, and from the beauty of their situation will doubtless become, before time is done, the resort of the fashionable population of Western America.

Notwithstanding all these unfavorable qualities, there are many small prairies within its mountains which, from their production of a nutritious bunchgrass, are well adapted for grazing purposes, and in despite of its changeable climate, stock is found to thrive well and to endure the severity of the winter without protection.

The second or middle region of Oregon, between the Blue and the President Ranges, is less elevated than the **third**, and conse-

quently all the stern extremities of the latter's climate and soil are proportionately modified. Its mean height is about a thousand feet above the level of the sea, and much of its surface is a rolling prairie country, with the exception of the portion above latitude 48°, which is very much broken by rivers and traverse mountain chains. It is consequently adapted only in sections to farming purposes. Plenty of game, however, is found in the forests of the country to compensate for its unfitness for agriculture. Below this parallel, and in the middle of the section, are extensive plains, admirably adapted to stock raising, from the perpetual verdure always overspreading them and from the salubrious climate that prevails throughout their neighborhood. Cattle thrive even better here than in the low country and there is no necessity for housing them at any time; neither need provender be laid in, the natural hay found always in abundance on the prairies being preferred by them to the fresh grass upon the bottoms. It is in this region the Indians raise their immense herds of horses, and here, whenever the territory shall be numerously settled, may be bred clouds of horsemen, who would not be exceeded by any light cavalry in the world.

The southern portion of this region as it advances to the boundary line becomes less favorable to the purposes of man, and loses its fertility by rolling into swelling sand hills, producing nothing but the wild wormwood, mixed with prickly pear, and a sparse sprinkling of short bunchgrass.

The first of lower region of Oregon is that which lies along the coast and extends westward to the line of the President's Range of mountains. The portion of this, lying north of the Columbia and between it and the Straits of Fuca, is a heavily timbered country covered with forests of trees of extraordinary size. It has, however, its spaces of prairie on which good pasturage is found, and it has also some fine arable land. This section is watered by four rivers, of which the Chickelis, disembogueing into the Columbia, and the Cowelitz, emptying into the sea at Gray's Harbor, are the most important. The forests of this portion of the lower region are its great feature. They consist of pines, firs, spruce, red and white oak, ash, arbutus, arbor vitae, cedar, poplar, maple, willow, cherry and yew, with so close and matted an undergrowth of hazel and other brambles as to render them almost impenetrable to the front of man. Most of the trees are of an enormous bulk, and they are studded so thick that they rise before the beholder like a stupendous and impregnable solidity, which declares futile all ordinary attempts to penetrate it. This astonishing exuberance is not confined alone to the timber of the section north of the Columbia, for we have an account of a fir growing at Astoria, eight miles from the ocean, on the southern bank of the Columbia, which measured forty-six feet in circumference at ten feet from the ground, ascended one hundred and fifty-three feet before giving off a branch, and was three hundred feet in its whole height. Another tree of the same species is said to be standing on the Umpqua,

the trunk of which is fifty-seven feet in circumference and two hundred and sixteen feet in length below its branches. Prime sound pines from two hundred to two hundred and eighty feet in height and from twenty to forty in circumference are by no means uncommon. The value of this spontaneous wealth has already been appreciated by the acute company who reign commercially predominant in this region, for already their untiring saw mills, plied by gangs of Sandwich Islanders and servile Iroquois, cut daily at Fort Vancouver alone thousands of feet of plank, which are transported regularly to the markets of the Pacific Islands.

But to return to that section of the lower region lying between the Columbia and the Straits of Fuca. The banks of the Cowe-litz are generally bare of timber, but the soil in their immediate vicinity is for the most part poor. The Hudson's Bay Company, however, have a fine farm of 600 acres in its western valley, which in 1841 produced 7,000 bushels of wheat. The average produce is twenty bushels to the acre. They have also a saw and grist mill now in operation there, both of which find a market for their products in the Sandwich and other islands of Polynesia. Live stock do not succeed well on these farms, and this is owing to the absence of low prairie grounds near the river, and also to the extensive depredations of the wolves. The hilly portion of the country immediately around, though its soil is very good, is too heavily timbered to be available for agricultural purposes, and this is also the case with many portions of the level lands. There are, however, large tracts of fine prairie at intervals between, suitable for cultivation, and ready for the plough.

Proceeding northward, we came to Fort Nasqually, a fine harbor at the southern point of Puget's Sound. Here the Hudson's Bay Company have another fine settlement, and raise wheat (15 bushels to the acre), oats, peas, potatoes and make butter for the Russian settlements. On the islands of the Sound and on the upper sections of Admiralty Inlet, the Indians cultivate potatoes in great abundance. These vegetables are extremely fine and constitute a large portion of their food.

Having disposed of this section, we come now to that portion of the lowest region lying south of the Columbia, between the President's Range and the coast. This by universal agreement is admitted to be the finest portion of all Oregon. It is entered by the Wallamette River, about five miles below Vancouver, which stream extends into its bosom over two hundred miles. This river is navigable for steamboats and vessels of light draught for nearly forty miles, when you come to a falls—the invariable feature of the rivers of this territory. Above the falls are the principal settlements of Oregon. Here the American adventurers have principally established themselves, and by the contributions of the emigrations from the States their number is rapidly increasing. As these settlements are described with some particularity in the journal which concludes this work, we will omit a particular account of them in this place.

The fertile portion of the valley of the Willamette is about two hundred and fifty miles long, and averages about seventy in width, making in all a surface of more than 17,000 square miles of rich arable land. The soil is an unctuous, heavy, black loam, which yields to the producer a ready and profuse return for the slightest outlay of his labor. The climate is mild throughout the year, but the summer is warm and very dry. From April to October, while the sea breezes prevail, rain seldom falls in any part of Oregon. During the other months, and while the south winds blow, the rains are frequent and at times abundant.

In the valleys of the low country snow is seldom seen, and the ground is so rarely frozen that ploughing may generally be carried on the whole winter. In 1834 the Columbia was frozen over for thirteen days, but this was principally attributable to the accumulation of ice from above. "This country," says Wyeth, "is well calculated for wheat, barley, oats, rye, peas, apples, potatoes and all the vegetables cultivated in the northern part of the Union. Indian corn does not succeed well, and is an unprofitable crop."

The following letter, recently received from Oregon, and giving an account of last year's crop, will serve to show the wonderful productiveness of this delightful region:*

"The harvest is just at hand, and such crops of wheat, barley, oats, peas and potatoes are seldom, if ever, to be seen in the States, that of wheat in particular—the stalks being in many instances as high as my head, the grains generally much larger—I would not much exaggerate to say they are as large again as those grown east of the mountains. The soil is good and the climate most superior, being mild the year round, and very healthy, more so than any country I have lived in the same length of time. Produce bears an excellent price—pork, 10 cents; beef, 6 cents; potatoes, 50 cents; wheat, \$1 per bushel. These articles are purchased at the above prices with great avidity by the merchants for shipment generally to the Sandwich Islands and Russian settlements on this continent, and are paid for mostly in stores and groceries, the latter of which is the product of these islands, particularly sugar and coffee, of which abundant supplies are furnished. Wages for laborers are high—common hands are getting from one to two dollars per day, and mechanics from two to four dollars per day. It is with difficulty men can be procured at these prices, so easily can they do better on their farms. The plains are a perpetual meadow, furnishing two complete new crops in a year, spring and fall, the latter remaining green through the winter. Beef is killed from the grass at any season of the year. If you have any enterprise left, or if your neighbors have any, here is the place for them."

Of this valley Lieutenant Wilkes says, "the wheat yields thirty-five or forty bushels for one bushel sown; or from twenty to thirty to the acre. Its quality is superior to that grown in the

*The above is an extract of a letter from General McCarver, who is at present the Speaker of the Lower House of Oregon.

United States, and its weight is nearly four pounds to the bushel heavier. The above is the yield of the new land; but it is believed will greatly exceed this after the third crop, when the land has been broken up and well tilled. In comparison to our own country, I would say that the labor necessary to acquire wealth or subsistence is in proportion of one to three; or, in other words, a man must work through the year three times as much in the United States to gain the same competency. The care of stock, which occupies so much time with us, requires no attention here, and on the increase alone a man might find support."

South of the valley of the Willamette we come to that of the Umpqua, in which is found large prairies of unsurpassable arable land, though the vicinage of the river is chiefly remarkable for its gigantic pine timber. Some idea of the extraordinary size of its forest trees may be obtained from the fact that their seed cones are sometimes more than a foot in length. Below the Umpqua we next arrive at the country watered by the Tootootutna, or Rogues River, and beyond that to the volumptuous valley of the Klamet. These lower portions of the first region are thought by many to be the paradise of the whole territory, excelling in richness of soil and voluptuousness of climate, even the celebrated valley of the Willamette. Of this opinion is Lieutenant Wilkes, to whose exertions and researches we are indebted for most of our accurate geographical knowledge of the western portion of Oregon. Indeed, probability seems to be in favor of regarding the valleys of the Klamet, Tootootutna and the Umpqua as the gardens of the West, and the cause of the preference of the northern portions is to be attributed mostly to the readier access afforded to them by the avenue of the Columbia. Population, however, is already gradually encroaching further and further south, and but few years will elapse before coasters will be running down to the mouths of these three rivers for their agricultural products.

The principal settlement of the Hudson's Bay Company is situated at Vancouver, on the Columbia; a point ninety miles from its mouth. At this station, the main branch of foreign commerce is carried on, and from it the chief exports in the way of pine plank, the grains, butter, etc., is made to the Russian settlements and to the islands of the ocean. They have another farm upon the Fallatry plains, west of the Willamette and about ten miles from Vancouver, which is also well stocked and in productive cultivation.

Before concluding our description of this portion of Oregon it may be well to state that the continual influx of emigrants from the States at the station of the Willamette, and the occasional conflictions of interest, rendered it necessary, in the absence of protection from the laws of the Republic, that the American settlers should establish a territorial government for themselves. They have accordingly proceeded to constitute two

legislative bodies, to appoint a chief justice and make the necessary ministerial officers to enforce his decisions.

The two houses meet at stated periods in the year for the transaction of all the necessary business of the little body politic, and the degree of importance which the new Legislature has already obtained may be estimated by the fact that the officers of the Hudson's Bay Company have accorded their acknowledgment of its powers by applying through the chief governor of all the stations in the Territory, (Doctor McLaughlin) for a charter for a canal around the Willamette Falls. The exclusive right was granted to him for twenty years on the condition that he should, in two years, construct a canal around them sufficient for the passage of boats thirteen feet in width.

This recognition of the authority of the legislative confederacy would, however, be a politic course in the resident governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, even though he should be ever so averse to it; for such recognition would not affect the interest of his association in case it were overthrown by his own government, and it would afford him, meanwhile, an opportunity for the quiet pursuit of his plans. It is but just, however, to bear in mind that the jurisdiction exercised by the company over all the citizens in the territory previous to this legislative convention was not their own arrogation, but the investiture of the British government for its own special objects, and it is no less just to say that this power was exercised by the gentleman above-named, during his rule, with a temperance and fairness but seldom found in those who have no immediate superior to account to.

The letter that brings us this latter information also tells us the Doctor has already commenced his work with a large number of hands, and that there is no doubt of his perfect ability to complete it within the time named. He was likewise constructing at the date of this information (last August) a large flouring mill with four run of burs, which was to be ready for business last fall.

The Rivers.

Having completed a description of the general characteristics of the three regions of Oregon, there remains but one feature of its geography unfinished, and as that extends for the most part continuously from region to region, it could not be properly embraced in the particular account of any one. We allude to the course and characteristics of the Columbia River and its tributaries.

The northern branch of the Columbia River rises in latitude 50° north and 116° west (from Greenwich) thence it pursues a northern route to McGillivray's pass in the Rocky Mountains. There it meets the Canoe River and by that tributary ascends northwesterly for eighty miles more. At the boat encampment at the pass, another stream also joins it through the mountains, and here the Columbia is 3,600 feet above the level of the sea.

It now turns south, having some obstructions to its safe navigation in the way of rapids, receiving many tributaries in its course to Colville, among which the Beaver, Salmon, Flatbow and Clarke's rivers from the east, and the Colville and two smaller tributaries, higher up, from the west, are the chief.

This great river is bounded thus far on its course by a range of high, well-wooded mountains, and in places expands into a line of lakes before it reaches Colville, where it is 2,049 feet above the level of the sea, having a fall of 550 feet in 220 miles.

Fort Colville stands in a plain of 2,000 or 3,000 acres. There the Hudson's Bay Company have a considerable settlement and a farm under cultivation, producing from 3,000 to 4,000 bushels of different grains, with which many of their other forts are supplied. On Clarke's River the company have another post called Flathead House, situated in a rich and beautiful country spreading westward to the bases of the Rocky Mountains. On the Flatbow also the company have a post, named Fort Kootanie.

From Fort Colville the Columbia trends westward for about sixty miles and then receives the Spokane from the south. This river rises in the lake of the Pointed Heart, which lies in the bosom of extensive plains of the same name. It pursues a northwesterly course for about 200 miles, and then empties into the Columbia. Its valley, according to Mr. Spaulding, an American missionary, who surveyed it, may be extensively used as a grazing district; but its agricultural capabilities are limited. The chief features of its region are (like those of the upper country, through which we have already traced the Columbia and its tributaries,) extensive forests of timber and wide sandy plains intersected by bold and high mountains.

From the Spokane, the Columbia continues its westerly course for sixty miles, receiving several smaller streams, until it comes to the Okanagan, a river finding its source in a line of lakes to the north, and affording boat and canoe navigation to a considerable extent up its course. On the east side of this river, and near its junction with the Columbia, the company have another station called Fort Okanagan. Though the country bordering on the Okanagan is generally worthless this settlement is situated among a number of small but rich arable plains.

After passing the Okanagan, the Columbia takes a southward turn and runs in that direction for 160 miles to Walla Walla, receiving in its course the Piscous, the Ekama and Entyatecom from the west, and lastly the Saptin or Lewis River from the south. From this point the part of the Columbia which we have traced, though obstructed by rapids (is navigable for canoes to the **Boat Encampment**, a distance of 500 miles to the north. The Saptin takes its rise in the Rocky Mountains, passes through the Blue, and reaches the Columbia after having pursued a northwesterly direction for 520 miles. It brings a large volume of water to the latter stream, but in consequence of its extensive and numerous rapids it is not navigable even for canoes except

in reaches. This circumstance is to be deplored, as its course is the line of route for the emigration of the States. It receives a large number of tributaries, of which the Kooskooske and Salmon are the chief. Our previous account of the arid and volcanic character of this region obviates the necessity of a further description here. There is a trading station upon the Saptin near the southern boundary line, called Fort Hall, and one also near its junction with the Columbia, called Fort Walla Walla. The Columbia at Walla Walla is 1,284 feet above the level of the sea and about 3,500 feet wide. It now takes its last turn to the westward, pursuing a rapid course of eighty miles to the Cascades, and receiving the Umatilla, Quisnel's, John Day's and Chute Rivers from the south, and Cathlatate's from the north. At the Cascades the navigation of the river is interrupted by a series of falls and rapids, caused by the immense volume forcing its way through the gorge of the President's Range. From the Cascades there is still-water navigation for forty miles, when the river is again obstructed by rapids; after passing these it is navigable for 120 miles to the ocean. The only other great independent river in the territory is the Tacoutche or Fraser's River. It takes its rise in the Rocky Mountains near the source of Canoe River; thence it takes a north-westerly course for eighty miles, when it makes a turn southward, receiving Stuart's River, which brings down its waters from a chain of lakes extending to the 56th degree of latitude. Turning down from Stuart's River, the Tacoutche pursues a southerly course until it reaches latitude 49°, where it breaks through the Cascade Range in a succession of falls and rapids, then turns to the west, and after a course of seventy miles more, disembogues into the Gulf of Georgia, on the Straits of Fuca, in latitude 47° 07'. Its whole length is 350 miles, but it is only navigable for seventy miles from its mouth by vessels drawing twelve feet of water. It has three trading posts upon it belonging to the company: Fort Langley at its mouth, Fort Alexandria at the junction of a small stream a few miles south of Quisnell's River, and another at the junction of Stuart's River. The country drained by this river is poor and generally unfit for cultivation. The climate is extreme in its variations of heat and cold, and in the fall months, dense fogs prevail which bar every object from the eye beyond the distance of a hundred yards. The chief features of the section are extensive forests, transverse ranges of low countries and vast tracts of marshes and lakes formed by the streams descending from the surrounding heights.

"The character of the great river is peculiar—rapid and sunken much below the level of the country, with perpendicular banks they run as it were in trenches, which make it extremely difficult to get at the water in many places, owing to their steep basaltic walls. They are at many points contracted by **dalles**, or narrows, which during the rise, back the water some dis-

tance, submerging islands and tracts of low prairie, and giving them the appearance of extensive lakes.

"The soil along the river bottoms is generally alluvial and would yield good crops were it not for the overflowing of the rivers, which check and kill the grain. Some of the finest portions of the land are thus unfitted for cultivation. They are generally covered with water before the banks are overflowed in consequence of the quicksands that exist in them and through which the water percolates."

"The rise of the streams flowing from the Cascade Mountains takes place twice a year, in February and November, and are produced by heavy and abundant rains. The rise of the Columbia takes place in May and June, and is attributable to the melting of the snows. Sometimes the swell of the latter is very sudden, if heavy rains should also happen at that period, but it is generally gradual and reaches its greatest height from the 6th to the 15th of June. Its perpendicular rise is from 18 to 20 feet at Vancouver, where a line of embankment has been thrown up to protect the lower prairie; but it has generally been flooded during these visitations and the crops often destroyed.

"The greatest rise of the Willamette takes place in February, and sometimes ascending to the height of 20 feet, does considerable damage. Both this river and the Cowelitz are much swollen by the backing of their waters during the height of the Columbia, all their lower grounds being at such times submerged. This puts an effectual bar to the border prairies being used for anything but pasturage. This happily is fine throughout the year, except in the season of floods, when the cattle must be driven to the high grounds."

The lakes of Oregon are numerous and well distributed in the different regions of the territory. In the northern section, the Okanogan (from which flows the river of that name), Stuart's and Fraser's, near the upper boundary; Quesnell's in 53° and Klamloop's in 51° are the largest. In the central section, we have the Flatbow, the Coeur d'Alene or "Pointed Heart" and the Kullespelm, and in the southern district are the Klamet, the Pit and an abundance of inferior lakes, as yet unnoticed on the maps, and for which geographers have not yet been able to discover names. Several of the latter are salt, and, at intervals, we find chains of hot springs bubbling in some places above the ground, like those of Iceland. The smaller lakes are said to add much to the picturesque beauty of the streams.

The whole territory is well watered in all directions, and from the peculiar character of its rivers, their descent, the rapidity of their currents and their frequent falls there is perhaps no country in the world which affords so many facilities for manufacturing purposes through the agency of water power. This is a peculiarly happy circumstance, when taken into consideration with the fact that the timber overspreading the west-

ern portion and clustering around its mill sites will, for a long time, form one of the principal exports in the markets of the Pacific. This will appear from the high prices which it now commands, and also from the fact that no other portion of the Northwest Coast produces it. Already trading vessels resort to the mouth of the Columbia to supply themselves with spars and other necessary materials, and the improving facilities of inland intercommunication has directed some of it from point to point within the territory.

Having now completed our account of the great physical characteristics of Oregon, our attention naturally turns to those portions of its natural history which are equally necessary to render a land serviceable to the wants of man. Of these the first and most important are the fisheries. "These," says Lieutenant Wilkes, "are so immense that the whole native population subsist on them." All the rivers, bays, harbors and shores of the coast and islands abound in salmon, sturgeon, cod, carp, sole, flounders, ray, perch, herring, lamprey eels and a kind of smelt or sardine, which is extremely abundant. The different kinds predominate alternately, according to the situations of the respective fisheries, but the salmon abound everywhere over all. This superior fish is found in the largest quantities in the Columbia and the finest of them are taken at the Dalles. They run twice a year, May and October, and appear inexhaustible. To so great an extent is traffic in them already advanced that the establishment at Vancouver alone exports ten thousand barrels of them annually. There are also large quantities of oysters, clams, crabs, mussels and other kinds of shell fish found in the different bays and creeks of the country, and to complete this piscatory feature, we are further told that whales are also found in numbers along the coast and at the mouth of the Strait of Fuca, where they are frequently captured by the **piscivorous** aborigines.

Of game, an equal abundance exists. In the spring and fall, the rivers literally swarm with geese, duck, cranes, swans and other species of water-fowl; and the elk, deer, antelope, bear, wolf, fox, martin, beaver, muskrat, grizzly bear and siffleur make, with them, the harvest of the hunter's rifle. In the middle section little or no game is to be found, but in the third region the buffalo are plenty and form an attraction to numerous hunting parties of the Blackfeet and Oregon Indians.

The population of Oregon Territory has been estimated by Lieutenant Wilkes to be about 20,000, of whom 19,200 or 300 are aborigines, and the remaining seven or eight hundred whites. This number and its proportions have, however, increased and varied considerably since the time of his estimate. The years succeeding his visit beheld large emigrations from the States, and the white population of Oregon may now be safely set down as being between two and three thousand, of whom the majority are from the States. The largest portion of these are

located in the valley of the Willamette, where, as we have already seen, they have adopted a government of their own. The other white inhabitants are sprinkled about in different portions of the Territory, at the establishments of the Hudson's Bay Company, whose officers and servants amount, in all, to between five and six hundred, but this number does not include their Iroquois and Sandwich Island serfs.

There are no means of ascertaining with accuracy the numbers of the aboriginal population, as many of them move from place to place in the fishing seasons; but, for the purpose of furnishing the reader with the nearest warrant for reliance, we will here insert a tabular statement, prepared by Mr. Crawford, of the Indian Department, for the use of last Congress:

**Indians West of the Rocky Mountains, in the Oregon
District, and Their Numbers.**

| | | | |
|-------------------|-------|------------------------|--------|
| Nez Perces..... | | Chimnapuns | 2,000 |
| Ponderas | | Shallatlos. | 200 |
| Flatheads. | 800 | Speannaros | 240 |
| Cour D'Alene..... | | Saddals. | 400 |
| Shoshonies. | 1,800 | Wallawallahs | 2,600 |
| Callapooahs. | | Chopunnishees | 3,000 |
| Umbaquahs. | | Catlashoots | 430 |
| Kiyuse | | Pohahs | 1,000 |
| Spokeus | | Willewahs | 1,000 |
| Oknanagans | | Sinacsops. | 200 |
| Cootomies | | Chillokittequaws | 2,400 |
| Chilts | 800 | Echebools | 1,000 |
| Chinookes | 400 | Wahupums | 1,000 |
| Snakes | 1,000 | Euesteurs. | 1,200 |
| Cathlamahs | 200 | Clackamurs | 1,800 |
| Wahkiakumes. | 200 | Chanwappans | 400 |
| Skillutes. | 2,500 | | |
| Sokulks. | 3,000 | | 29,570 |

The most numerous and warlike of the Oregon Indians are in the islands to the north, but on the mainland they are generally friendly and well disposed. They are, however, rapidly passing away before the advancing destiny of a superior race, and with the wild game vanish gradually from the white man's tracks. Those remaining are a servile and degraded class, who perform the meanest offices of the settlements and readily consent to a mode of existence under the missionaries and other settlers but little short of vassalage. In the Wallamette Valley there are now left but a few remnants of the once numerous and powerful tribes that formerly inhabited it. At the mouth of the Columbia there are some few of the Chenooks still left, and about the Cascades and at The Dalles still linger considerable numbers of this ill-fated and fast fading people. There is no longer any spirit left in them; their hearts are broken,

their bows unstrung, and from lords of the soil they have sunk to the degradation of its slaves.

The Kiyuses and Nez Percés still maintain a portion of their independence, but numbers of them, through the exertions of the missionaries, have made considerable advances in civilization and many more would doubtless adapt themselves to a more methodical system of life were not the first lessons of the science an exaction of their labors for the benefit of others. At the present they can only be regarded in the light of a servile population, which, in the existing dearth of labor, is rendered of vast service to the active settler. In speaking of the influences of the missionaries over the Indians, Lieutenant Wilkes remarks: "They have done but little towards Christianizing the natives, being principally engaged in cultivating the mission farms and in the increase of their own flocks and herds. As far as my personal observation went, there are very few Indians to engage their attention, and they seemed more occupied with the settlement of the country and agricultural pursuits than in missionary labors."

The treatment of the Indians by the Hudson's Bay Company is politic and judicious; they rigidly enforce that wise provision of their charter which forbids the sale of ardent spirits, and in carrying it out have even been known, upon the arrival of a vessel at the Columbia with spirits aboard, to purchase that portion of the cargo to prevent others from defeating the wisdom of prohibition. Schools for the native children are attached to all the principal trading posts, and particular care is extended to the education of the half-breed children,* the joint offspring

*A natural obligation where so many are got.

of the traders and the Indian women, who are retained and bred, as far as possible, among the whites, and subsequently employed, when found capable, in the service of the company. The policy of this course is obvious. The savage is gradually cured of his distrust and coaxed into new connections. He abandons the use of his bows, his arrows and all his former arms, and the result is that he soon becomes an absolute dependant upon those who furnish him his guns, ammunition, fish-hooks, blankets, etc.

The course observed by this company to American settlers is equally politic. They are received with kindness and aided in the prosecution of their objects so long as these objects are only agricultural; but no sooner does any of them attempt to hunt, trap or trade with the natives, then all the force of the body is immediately directed towards them. "A worthy missionary, now established on the Columbia," says Greenhow, "while acknowledging in conversation with me the many acts of kindness received by him from the Hudson's Bay Company's agents, at the same time declared—that he would not buy a skin to make a cap without their assent."

No sooner is an American trading post established than a British agent, with more merchandise and a larger amount of

ready money, settles down beside it, and by the superior advantages he gives the Indians in paying high and selling low, drives the American trader to despair, and finally sends him, with his hopes crushed and his enterprise destroyed, back to the States a ruined man. In pursuance of the same monopolizing system, the company endeavor to prevent the vessels of the United States from obtaining cargoes on the Northwest Coast, and truth to say, they are generally successful in their object.

By its enormous wealth, its extensive stations, its able policy and numerous retainers, this company has indeed become a formidable body, and it is a matter of importance that we should make ourselves acquainted with its genius and its tendencies.

We have seen that it is the representative of the interests of Great Britain in Oregon; we have glanced at a few of the means it adopts to protect and further them, and now that recent events have given a subordinate aspect to their political position, it is of interest to examine the mode their sagacity has devised to meet and overcome the circumstances threatening their decline.

The original object of the Hudson's Bay Company's establishment in Oregon was for the purposes of fur trading alone, and to that their operations were confined until their investiture with the attributes of territorial sovereignty by the British government. From that time, however, it appears they considered no person should be permitted within the limits of the Territory, except by their consent, and hence their degeneration into a mere band of conspirators, as evidenced by the course of policy we have already alluded to. At length, however, the fur trade in the countries of the Columbia nearly ceased and the company were obliged to turn their attention to other objects. They have, it will be found, laid out farms on the most extensive scale, erected mills, established manufactures, entered into the fisheries, employed vessels for the purposes of commerce, and, in short, at the present moment, though they have lost the regal shadow, they present the aspect of a dominant corporation, whose enormous wealth enables it to engross everything above the mere pastoral and agricultural branches of industry and to turn even the products of those into their already over-running coffers. This is not presented as a matter of complaint against the Hudson's Bay Company, for it is but the natural bent of wealth and corporative enterprise to monopolize and grasp to the destruction of every opposing influence, but it affords a subject of reproachful reflection against our government for not checking these tendencies and counteracting their effects by stretching its protection to those who fall within their reach. The maternal care of England for her subjects stretches to the most obscure extremity of the earth, while the eye of the Republic overlooks its despairing children even in a portion of her own immediate dominions.

PROPOSAL FOR A NATIONAL RAILROAD FROM THE ATLANTIC TO THE PACIFIC.

For the Purpose of Obtaining a Short Route to China.

Having ascertained what Oregon is, our next inquiry becomes in what view it is of the most importance to us, and how we may most readily and completely avail ourselves of its advantages.

As **an agricultural country** it is of no great importance to a nation having contiguous leagues on leagues of land yielding the same products nearer at home, the abundant fertility of which has never yet been challenged by the spade or plough;* but as a commercial avenue to the wealth of the Indies and the riches of the Pacific, its value is incalculable.

In any view, whether agricultural or commercial, the advantages and worth of this territory depend upon the easiness of its approach from the States, and any means that are adopted to facilitate this intercommunication will, according to their degree of efficiency, proportionately advance its destiny. Nature has already contributed to the object more liberally in the country under consideration than to the same extent of any other portion of the globe. From the Missouri to the Rocky Mountains spreads a plain scarcely broken by a hillock; through that stupendous ridge gapes a pass presenting no discouraging opposition to heavily laden wagons with single teams, and from its western side the banks of the Saptin lead the traveler safely through to the navigable waters of the Columbia.

The time required for the journey by the present mode of traveling is from three to four months; but though this might suffice for the gradual drain of a surplus population, it will not meet the new designs which the full possession of this land of promise opens to us.

These designs are legitimately the same which have agitated the commercial world since the discovery of this continent, and they are now happily within our reach and accomplishment by means of a **railroad**. As it is one of the main purposes of this work to urge this project upon the people of this country, and as it is filled with considerations of the weightiest moment, it will be necessary to treat it with that method and particularity which its merits demand, and which will adapt it to the ready and accurate comprehension of every understanding.

Our first purpose, therefore, will be to measure the value of the object we seek by philosophical inquiry, and by the estimation of its importance by other powers, and our second to glance at some of the results that will flow from it to our benefit as a nation.

The commerce of the East, in every age, has been the source of the opulence and power of every nation which has engrossed

*Our unoccupied public lands amount to 700,000,000 acres.

it. By a silent and almost imperceptible operation, India has been through centuries the secret but active cause of the advancement of mankind, and while lying apparently inert in her voluptuous clime, has changed the maritime balances of Europe with the visit of every new nation that has sought the riches of her shores. Her trade imparted the first great impulse to drowsy and timid navigation; it revealed in the direction to its coasts region after region before unknown; it found for the guidance of the mariner new planets in the sky, and its restless spirit has not even been content to make more than a temporary pause in the discovery of another world.* Like the Genii of the fable it still offers the casket and the sceptre to those who, unintimidated by the terrors which surround it, are bold enough to adventure to its embrace. In turn, Phœnicia, Israel,† Carthage, Greece, Rome, (through her vanquished tributaries) Venice, Pisa, Genoa, Portugal, Holland, and lastly England, have won and worn the ocean diadem. **Our** destiny now offers it to us!

To shorten, by a western passage, the route to the Indies, which now must be conducted circuitously around the fearful barriers of Cape Horn and Southern Africa, is a design that has long occupied the attention and aroused the exertions of all maritime nations. The first and most remarkable effort to effect it was made in the latter part of the fifteenth century, by Columbus, which resulted in the discovery of another world, and the search has been maintained with but little intermission by the intervening ages ever since. Exploring expeditions to both the Atlantic and Pacific Coasts have pryed in every sinusity of shore from latitude 50° south to the border of the Frigid zone, and in the defeat of their exertions projects have been formed even to pierce the continent to accomplish the design. As early as the seventeenth century a company was formed in Scotland to improve the advantages offered by the Isthmus of Darien and Panama for trade in the Pacific;‡ but the project being discountenanced by England at the violent remonstrances of her powerful East India Company, the subscriptions were withdrawn and the enterprise temporarily dropped. It was revived soon after by its indefatigable projector, who, having raised £700,000 and 1,200 men, set sail in five ships to found a colony; but being denounced by the government and attacked by a Spanish force while its reduced numbers were suffering under disease and famine, they sunk under their accumulated misfortunes and abandoned the enterprise in despair.

From that time to this, the project of dividing the isthmus has been a favorite theme with European philosophers and states-

* The object of Columbus was not, as has been erroneously supposed, the discovery of a new continent, but a shorter route to Cathay.

† Envyng the success of the Phœnicians, David and Solomon, after having seized upon Idumea as a preparative, sent their fleets through the Arabian Gulf to Tarshish, Ophir, and other ports in Africa and India, and by this means diffused throughout the land of Israel "the wealth of Ormus and of Ind." It is to this cause, doubtless, that the latter monarch specially owes his vast reputation for sagacity, as well as the splendor of his reign.

‡ This scheme was projected by William Patterson, who was supposed to have been originally a South American Buccaneer, cotemporary with Sir Henry Morgan.

men; but the subject appears never to have advanced beyond the bounds of mere speculation until later years. In 1814 it was revived by Spain, who this time seemed to be seriously in earnest in the matter. By a vote of her Cortes, dated April 30th, in the above year, the immediate commencement of the work was decreed, but the foreign domestic troubles into which she was plunged at this period rendered her incapable of carrying out the grand design.

The project found its next active and practical supporter in Bolivar, who in 1827 appointed a commissioner to ascertain, by actual survey, the **best** line, either by railroad or canal, between the two seas. The commissioner reported in favor of the latter, and an estimate was subsequently made by a French engineer that a canal, forty miles in length, might be constructed across it at an expense of less than three millions of dollars, but the untimely death of the illustrious patron of the scheme put an end to its further prosecution. The next movement in the measure took place in 1842, when the Mexican government, upon application, empowered Don Jose de Garay, one of its citizens, to effect a communication across its territories, between the oceans, and invested him with the most ample rights and immunities on condition of his completing the work. Don Jose, in pursuance of his grant, appointed a scientific commission that accomplished the survey in 1842 and 1843, the result of which established the perfect practicability of a ship canal across the Isthmus of Tehauntepec. Upon these grounds and the security of his governmental grants and privileges, its projector is now in London soliciting the aid of British capital to carry out the scheme.

France, with the view of advancing the value of her oceanic possessions, is deeply alive to the importance of this measure. Under the special patronage of Guizot and Admiral Roussin, a private survey of the isthmus has recently been made, the importance attributed to which may be imagined by the careful suppression of its details from the public. Thus evidences multiply that the world will not much longer endure the petty obstacles which bar them from the long-desired western passage to the Indies. How important, therefore, that we, who have an engrossing interest in this subject, should protect ourselves from being outstripped by those whom our rapidly advancing destiny already promises to leave behind.

The English government, though the junction of the seas has been repeatedly and strenuously urged by the representatives of some of her most important mercantile interests, have betrayed an apathy upon the subject which, if not accounted for by the principles of her usually selfish policy, would appear inexplicable, but she doubtless reasons thus:

“‘Let well alone.’ By the present routes around the Cape of Good Hope, and through the Isthmus of Suez, we have a fair start with the best, and a superior chance over most other nations for the Indies; and while our established power in that region

and our superior marine secures us a preponderance in her trade, it would be madness to contribute to afford superior facilities and advantages to others. Through her geographical position the United States, from whose wonderful energies and fearful strides toward maritime equality we have everything to fear, can more readily avail herself of the benefits of this passage than any other nation. Her fleets would stream in one unbroken line through the Gulf of Mexico, her naval power would overawe our settlements on the Northwest Coasts, and her impertinent enterprise, of which we have had a late evidence in China, would extend itself throughout our Indian possessions. The Marquesas Islands, which, in case this project be carried out, lie directly in the road of navigation, would at a step advance into one of the most important maritime posts in the world, while the Society Islands, also in the possession of France, would enhance immensely in their value. Worse than all, returning back, the vessels of all Europe would ere long procure their tropical products from the newly awakened islands of the ocean, and in just the degree that the value of Oceana would increase, our West India possessions would depreciate. By changing the route and extending it across the ocean instead of circuitously through it, we should voluntarily resign into other hands those commanding maritime and naval stations which we have won at the outlay of so much diplomacy and perseverance. The power and advantages of St. Helena, Mauritius, Capetown at the Cape of Good Hope, and the Falkland Islands commanding the passage around Cape Horn, will be transferred to New Orleans and other cities of the United States bordering on the Gulf of Mexico, to Cuba, Chagres, Panama and the Marquesas Islands. Let us, therefore, 'let well alone,' and be content with our present supremacy upon its present basis; unless indeed we can gain a superior advantage through the Arctic Sea,* or monopolize a Mexican route to the shores of the Californias. The isthmus passage must, however, be discouraged, and if persevered in, Cuba must at all hazards be obtained to compensate in some degree for the losses we shall sustain on the African Coasts."

This supposition is by no means strained. It is but a fair inference from Britain well known selfish character and policy, and the United States would be justified in turning the proposition against her.

Having thus measured the importance attributed to the design of shortening the western passage to the Indies by the immense sums which have been lavished, and the hazards which have been braved upon the mere **hope** of its accomplishment,

* **NEW VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY.**—It is in the contemplation of the British government to send out another expedition to the Arctic regions, with the view of discovering *the* or *a* Northwest passage between the Atlantic and Pacific; and the Council of the Royal Society, having been solicited to give their opinion as to the desirableness of such an expedition, have stated that, independent of the great object to be attained, the benefits that would accrue to the sciences of geography and terrestrial magnetism render such an expedition peculiarly desirable. The *Erebus* and *Terror*, which were recently employed at the South pole, under Sir J. Ross, have returned in such good order as to be ready to be made immediately available for employment on similar service.—*English Paper*.

is it not incumbent upon us to inquire if we have not within our own boundaries the means and facilities of effecting it, and if we have, is it not likewise incumbent on us to carry the long desired object to its fulfilment? We owe this to our own character, to our posterity, to the world—and we most specially owe to the genius of the fifteenth century (which in the prosecution of this very plan redeemed us from the ocean) the completion of the purpose which we barred.

The circumstance of England's opposition to the plan (or to a similar one) is alone an urgent motive to the undertaking; the revelations of each succeeding day strengthen the opinion that our interests and policy are founded upon antagonistic principles. We are her natural rival upon the ocean, and as we advance she retires. We are the only power that ever baffled her arms, and the course of things have marked us as the heir of her strength and the successor to her trident. Already the commerce of the globe, divided into eight parts, gives more than **five** between us two, and a sub-division affords but one part less to us than to her. Here, to use the expression of one of her own writers, is a "great fact;" a fact so pregnant that it turns Speculation into Prescience, and points to the decree of Fate in our future and speedy preponderance. France understands the relative positions and interests of this country and Great Britain as well as, if not better, than ourselves, and is perhaps actuated to the interest she takes in the opening of the isthmus by a more comprehensive policy than that which springs merely from the influences of an immediate self-interest. The spirit of her people is akin to ours, their natural bent of mind inclines them for democratic institutions, and their hearts beat towards us with sentiments of warm affection. To quote the language of one of their popular organs: She looks toward us as her natural ally and as the only power which can eventually release the ocean from the tyranny of Great Britain. If this hope live in France, how much stronger must its ray be cherished by those inferior powers who dare not aspire to rise above submission?

"There is a divinity that shapes the ends" of nations as of men, and we may discern the fulfilment of the maxim in the continual defeat of the most daring enterprise of man as applied to this design, through a period of four centuries. Not ripe for its great revolution, Providence has denied it to the world until the hour should arrive for the first great step toward perfecting the grand scheme of the creation. A thousand combining influences tell us that the time has come; the universal beams of knowledge have driven Superstition and Ignorance from the stage of action to mope in the dreary cells which imprisoned under them too long the genius of mankind. Science having stripped experiment of its terrors, measures with accuracy the results of every assay, and despising the obstacles of Nature, whose elements, nay, even the forked lightning itself, she has

fastened to her car, feels as capable of beating down the barriers of a continent as of measuring the distance to a planet. A new principle has been evoked which, though simple in its pretensions and matter-of-fact in its operations, will share in future times the honor of the mariner's compass and the printing press in civilizing and advancing man. The object of each is sympathetic with the other; the result of each must tend to the same end. Their principle is **intercourse** and their spirit **progress**. The first awoke our hemisphere from its sleep in the abyss; the second infused sentiments which turned the footsteps of our ancestors toward it, and we must now invoke the third for the final accomplishment of its destiny!

It is true there is much that is startling in the proposition of a **national railroad from the Atlantic to the Pacific Oceans**, and much that will strike the hasty observer as chimerical; but when we have seen stupendous pyramids raised by human hands in the midst of a sterile and shifting desert; while we know that despite the obstacles of Nature and the rudeness of Art, a semi-barbarous people, many centuries before the Christian era, erected around their empire a solid barrier of wall, thirty feet in height, and so broad that six horsemen could ride on it abreast, carrying it over the most formidable mountains, across rivers on arches and through the declensions and sinuosities of valleys to the distance of **fifteen hundred miles**, let us not insult the enterprise of this enlightened age by denouncing the plan of a simple line of rails over a surface but a little greater in extent, without one half the natural obstacles to overcome, as visionary and impracticable.

Geographers variously estimate the greatest breadth of our country from ocean to ocean at 1,700 to 2,000 miles.* Taking the largest estimate and adding to it 500 miles to allow for occasional deviation of route, and we have a distance of 2,500 miles, which at the moderate rate of fifteen miles to the hour,† can be accomplished in **seven days**. We have already from New York a continuous line of railroad and steamboat communication laid out to Chicago, Illinois, proceeding from which point, directly along the 42d parallel, we find a smooth and gently rolling plain, without serious obstruction or obstacle in any part, until we strike the Great Southern Pass, through the Rocky Mountains, into Oregon. The following account of an expedition in wagons to this point, in 1829, will serve to show the nature of the facilities which offer themselves to the traveler through the region lying between the mountains and the States. It is an extract from a letter addressed by Messrs. Smith, Jackson and Soublette to the Secretary of War, in October, 1829, and published with President Jackson's message, January 25th, 1831:

*McCulloch, in his *Gazateer*, compiled from all the authorities, estimates the breadth at its widest stretch to be 1,700 miles—Professor Morse, in his *Geography* published in 1845, at 2,000.

†Our Boston railroad cars frequently travel at the rate of 22 miles to the hour, stoppage included.

"On the 10th of April last (1829) we set out from St. Louis with eighty-one men, all mounted on mules, ten wagons, each drawn by five mules, and two dearborns (lights carriages or carts), each drawn by one mule. Our route was nearly due west to the western limits of the State of Missouri, and thence along the Santa Fe trail, about forty miles from which the course was some degrees north of west, across the waters of the Kansas,‡ and up the Great Platte River to the Rocky Mountains and to the head of Wind River, where it issues from the mountains.

"This took us until the 16th of July and was as far as we wished the wagons to go, as the furs to be brought in were to be collected at this place, which is, or was, this year the great rendezvous of the persons engaged in that business. **Here the wagons could easily have crossed the Rocky Mountains, it being what is called the Southern Pass, had it been desirable for them to do so;** which it was not, for the reason stated. For our support, at leaving the Missouri settlements until we should get into the buffalo country, we drove twelve head of cattle besides a milch cow. Eight of them only being required for use before we got to the buffaloes, the others went on to the head of Wind River. On the 4th of August the wagons, being in the meantime loaded with the furs which had been previously taken, we set out on the return to St. Louis. All the high points of the mountains then in view were white with snow, but the passes and valleys and all the level country were green with grass. Our route back was over the same ground nearly as in going out, and we arrived at St. Louis on the 10th of October, bringing back the ten wagons (the dearborns being left behind); four of the oxen and the milch cow were also brought back to the settlements of the Missouri, as we did not need them for provisions. The usual weight in the wagons was about one thousand eight hundred pounds. The usual progress of the wagons was from fifteen to twenty miles per day. **The country being almost all open, level and prairie,** the chief obstructions were ravines and creeks, the banks of which required cutting down, and for this purpose a few pioneers were generally kept ahead of the caravan. This is the first time that wagons ever went to the Rocky Mountains, **and the ease and safety with which it was done, prove the facility of communicating overland with the Pacific Ocean, the route from the Southern Pass, where the wagons stopped, to the Great Falls of the Columbia, being easier and better than on this side of the mountains, with grass enough for horses and mules, but a scarcity of grain for the support of men.**"

In addition to this account, which so satisfactorily establishes the feasibility of the work in view, we have the corroborative relation, if corroboration lends any strength to indisputable

‡ It must be borne in mind that this departure from the direct line of route along the 42d parallel is pursued by travelers with a view of obtaining water, and also game, which are invariably to be found in the vicinity of great rivers.

testimony, of Thomas P. Farnham, who, in his journal of a journey made from the Mississippi to the mouth of the Columbia, in 1840, gives us the following statement:

"Among the curiosities of this place (Fort Boise, a trading post on the Saptin,) were the fore-wheels, axletree and thills of a one-horse wagon, run by American missionaries from the State of Connecticut thus far towards the mouth of the Columbia. It was left here under the belief that it could not be taken through the Blue Mountains, but fortunately for the next that shall attempt to cross the continent, a safe and easy passage has lately been discovered, by which vehicles of this description may be drawn through to the Walla Walla." Here we have the testimony of an intelligent observer who has traveled over every inch of the route, as well as that on this side of the mountains as the portion unexplored by the former party, whose account we have previously given. This, with numerous similar accounts in existence, among which is the journal at the end of this volume, must convince the most skeptical that a railroad to and through this district of country is practicable beyond a doubt. There is reason to believe, however, that upon the careful preparatory survey which must be instituted, new notches through these formidable ridges may be found still better adapted to the work in view, and in a more direct line with Puget's Sound, in whose commodious harbors our commercial operations in the Pacific, from the absolute absence of the requisite facilities on any southern portion of the Oregon coast, must necessarily center.* Taking the practicability of the work therefore as established, it will not be improper to devote ourselves to a short inquiry as to the other modes and means of effecting the ultimate design.

In these, Nature herself volunteers her assistance to the enterprise. No ocean is so remarkably adapted to steam navigation as the Pacific. Its tranquil surface is scarcely ever agitated by a storm, and propitious winds and currents accelerate the course of the mariner across its bosom. The general motion of its waters is from west to east at the average velocity of twenty-eight miles a day. In consequence the sea appears on some portions of the coast to flow constantly from the land, and vessels sail with great celerity from Acapulco in Mexico to the Philippine Islands, on the coast of Asia. The N. E. trade winds blow almost uninterruptedly between latitudes 5° and 23° north, and with the assistance of the currents and the flow of the sea, enable vessels within this region to sail from America to Asia almost without changing their sails. Our course to the Indies from the mouth of the Columbia, or from the Straits of St. Jean de Fuca would be southwest to the Sandwich Islands, and from thence, directly along the twentieth parallel, across. Returning by a more northwardly route, advantage would be taken

* By crossing the river at Wallawalla and proceeding in a direct line along the banks of the Eyakema river, the distance is shorter to the harbors of Puget Sound than to the shores of the ocean.

of the polar currents which set N. W. towards the Straits of Behring, and also of the variable winds prevailing in the higher latitudes. Having crossed our continent in seven days, we span the Pacific in twenty-five more, and thus in thirty-two reach the ports of China; by the same route back the products of the East may land upon the shores of Europe in forty-six days; a period of time but little more than one-third of that now taken to make the ordinary passages around the southern extremities of America and Africa.

The view that this opens to the mind, independent of its internal benefits, staggers speculation with its immensity and stretches beyond all ordinary rules of calculation. A moderate forecast may, however, foresee the following results: The riches of the most unlimited market in the world would be thrown open to our enterprise, and obeying the new impulse thus imparted to it, our commerce would increase till every ocean billow between us and the China Sea would twinkle with a sail. By the superior facilities conferred upon us by our position and control of the route, we should become the common carrier of the world for the India trade. "Britannia rules the waves" would dwindle to an empty boast, and England would have to descend from her arrogant assumption of empire o'er the sea to the level of a suppliant's tone, in common with the great and small of the European powers, for the benefits of this avenue of nations. The employment as common carrier could be secured to us by the imposition of a tonnage duty, heavy enough to amount to a prohibition, upon all foreign bottoms arriving at our Pacific Coast. There is nothing remarkably selfish, neither is there anything repugnant to fair dealing in this regulation; we are deserving of one special advantage as a premium for conferring this benefit upon all, and we have the example of Great Britain herself to justify us in the adoption of the rule. The rapid and excessive increase of our commercial marine would necessarily follow this result. Encouraged by the comparative ease and safety of its service, and enticed by the liberal wages which the demand for so many hands would ensure, thousands of our young men, whom the dangers and privations of a seafaring life have heretofore deterred from carrying out the natural desire of visiting foreign climes, would embrace the sailor's occupation, and a nursery would thus be established from whose exhaustless sources the demand of our increasing navy would always find a supply.

(Continued.)